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TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

INFO RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 5566

BT

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MORG, MPIC, CU, UR, POL

SUBJECT: REPORTS OF SOVIET PILOTS IN CUBA

1. PRESS STORIES ABOUT INCREASED ACTIVITY BY SOVIET PILOTS IN CUBA HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING FOR SEVERAL DAYS IN US. THESE STORIES STEMMED FROM AVIATION WEEK ARTICLE WHICH ACCORDING TO UPI REPORTED THAT "U.S. OFFICIALS ARE CONCERNED OVER A RECENT INFLUX OF SOVIET COMBAT PILOTS INTO CUBA." THE REASON FOR THE MOSCOW MOVE, THE WEEKLY SAID, "MAY BE AN ATTEMPT TO WARN THE UNITED STATES AGAINST ANY MOVES AGAINST CUBA IN THE BELIEF THAT THIS COUNTRY WOULD AVOID A DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SOVIET MILITARY."

2. ON APRIL 6 PENTAGON SPOKESMAN CONFIRMED THAT "WE ARE AWARE OF SOME SOVIET PILOTS IN CUBA AND WE ARE EVALUATING THE REPORTS TO SEE WHAT THEY MEAN." FOLLOWING IS GUIDANCE FOR USE WITH HOST AND THIRD COUNTRY OFFICIALS ON IF ASKED BASIS:

3. THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET FIGHTER PILOTS IN CUBA IS NOT NEW, BUT APPARENTLY THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN THEIR NUMBERS OF LATE. THE TOTAL NUMBER REMAINS SMALL. WE ARE WATCHING THIS SITUATION CLOSELY, BUT AT THE MOMENT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE WHICH WOULD INDICATE THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT IS RELATED TO THE WARNINGS WE HAVE MADE ABOUT CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. KISSINGER

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TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 5554

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BT

UNCLAS STATE 085406

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MOGRM, MDOL, CU, UR, POL

SUBJECT: SOVIET PILOTS IN CUBA

THE FOLLOWING ARE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S COMMENT ON
APRIL 7 IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING PRESENCE OF
SOVIET PILOTS IN CUBA:

Q. THE PENTAGON ACKNOWLEDGED YESTERDAY THAT IT HAS REPORTS
THAT TWENTY SOVIET PILOTS ARE FLYING MIG'S IN CUBA. TWO
QUESTIONS; DOES THIS REPRESENT ANY SIGNIFICANT VARIATION
IN THE HABIT OF ACTIVITIES THERE? AND, SECONDLY DOES THE
UNITED STATES TAKE EXCEPTION TO THIS?

A. FIRST, I MAY BE WRONG, BUT I WAS NOT AWARE THAT THE
DEFENSE DEPARTMENT WAS CONFIRMING A SPECIFIC NUMBER. I
WAS INFORMED THAT THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN HAD
SAID THAT WE WERE AWARE OF THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET PILOTS
IN CUBA. THERE HAVE BEEN SOVIET MILITARY ADVISERS, AND
I ASSUME THAT IS INCLUDING PILOTS IN CUBA OVER THE PAST
YEARS, WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CLOSE SOVIET-CUBAN
MILITARY INVOLVEMENT. SO, I DO NOT THINK, ON THE BASIS
OF THESE REPORTS, WE ATTACH ANY SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE TO
THIS MOST RECENT REPORT.

Q. HAVE THERE BEEN CUMBAT PILOTS THERE BEFORE?

A. I AM NOT SURE. CERTAINLY THE CUBAN AIR FORCE HAS
BEEN TRAINED BY THE SOVIETS. KISSINGER

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